MARRIAGE CUSTOMS OF THE BABEMBA TRIBES

The tribe in question is that of the Babemba. The Babemba 101 175
have their own history, thus it is an important tribe. They claim to have come originally from the Lunda kingdom. It is well known that the Lunda, situated on the upper reaches of the Kasaï River, a tributary of the Congo, is one of the biggest and most powerful negro kingdoms of Africa. The Balunda established their rule over all the neighboring tribes, thus founding three big colonies which go by the name of Baluba. The first of these colonies was established at the source of the Zambezi River, partly in Portuguese Angola, partly in British Northern Rhodesia. This first colony was later conquered by the Matabeles who had originally come from Zululand. It took the name of Barotseland. The second Baluba colony was established further east between the Kasaï and Sankuru rivers, while the third of the Baluba colonies settled on the banks of the Lualaba, another tributary of the Congo. The Babemba (Baluba) came from this last colony.

Their migration took place about 200 years ago. The story 167 175
of this migration is one of the most impressive in history. The exodus lasted for nearly ten years—the tribe first crossed the Luapula, Chambezi and Luangwa rivers; but then they turned back and again crossed the Chambezi River further north, and finally settled on the banks of the Karungu River, nine kilometers (five and a half miles) north of the present-day missionary settlement of Malole. There they came upon a related tribe by the name of Babemba. The Baluba [128] superseded them entirely by appropriating their territory and bringing them into subjection. The two races soon merged. The Baluba ceased to be Baluba and were henceforth called Babemba. [101]

Since their exodus from Baluba, the Babemba have had about 175
thirty kings, each with his history—and a glorious history at that. [143]
The most illustrious page in their history describes their wars with the invading hordes of the Baangoni of Zulu origin. While all the neighboring tribes yielded and paid tribute to the Baangoni, the Babemba gloriously withstood the terrible assaults of the formidable enemy. The war lasted for ten years (from 1860 to 1870). Finally, in the course of a decisive battle the Babemba won complete victory. Sungadiaba, the great Mungoni chieftain, died from grief over this defeat. His army was completely disorganized, and the

2 Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1939
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PART I

THE PEOPLE—THEIR COUNTRY AND DIET

CHAPTER I

THE BEMBA PEOPLE AND THEIR COUNTRY

Origin.

THE Bemba are the largest and most highly organized tribe in North-Eastern Rhodesia.[1] They are a warrior people of Congo origin which apparently invaded their present territory at the end of the seventeenth or the beginning of the eighteenth century. Moving eastwards from the banks of the Kasai, they eventually reached the great Luapula river which forms the western boundary of this part of Northern Rhodesia. They passed north of the Bangweolu swamps, according to most traditions, travelled up the Chambesi in a north-easterly direction, and finally established their Paramount chief, the Citimukulu, in the centre of this Tanganyika plateau not far from the present Government station of Kasama. From this point they gradually expanded, pushing back earlier immigrants of the same origin, such as the Bisa, either in a west and south-westerly direction into the swamps of Lake Bangweolu, or eastwards to the borders of the Luangwa valley. They also drove wedges into the territory of the Lungu, Itabwa, and Mambwe to the north. Hence numbers of scattered tribelets came to acknowledge the rule of the Citimukulu and paid him tribute, and groups of his chosen followers were settled in the outlying districts to exact these dues. His power seems to have been still further consolidated by the arrival of Arab traders in the middle of the nineteenth century, since they brought him guns, of which he kept complete possession, in return for ivory and slaves. In fact before the coming of the white man at the end of the century it seems that the Citimukulu held sway over the whole of the district between the four great lakes, Tanganyika, Nyasa, Bangweolu, and Mweru, and south into the present Lala and Lamba country. With the

[1] J. Moffat Thomson gives the following figures for the biggest tribes of NE. Rhodesia: Bemba 114,874, Cewa 78,400, Ngoni 53,991, and none of the other tribal groups number more than 30,000. N. Rhodesian Government 'Memorandum on the native tribes and tribal areas of N. Rhodesia', 1934.

101 • 174 [161] [p. 15]

2:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1939
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

174 establishment of the British South Africa Company at Kasama in 1899 the military conquests of the Bemba suddenly ceased. The Citimukulus of to-day rule over their own territory only. It stretches from 29° west to 32·5° east and from 9° north to 12° south, and covers the whole of the administrative district of Kasama and most of those of Mpika, Chinsali, and Luwingu, an area rather larger than that of Ireland. It includes much of the Bisa and Lungu territory occupied during the last century and now predominantly inhabited by them, and the Bemba are still regarded as the dominant tribe in the district by members of other groups.

101 173 According to their own traditions, and those of the surrounding peoples, the Bemba were originally an offshoot of the great Luba tribe which inhabited the Katanga area of the Congo east of the Kasai river, and their invasion of their present territory seems to have been one of a series of immigrations of which the Bisa were apparently the first to arrive, the Bemba the second, and the Lunda, now inhabiting the region round Lake Mweru, the third.[1] The swamp-dwelling peoples of the Bangweolu district—the Ushi, Unga, Bena Ngumbo, Bena Cishinga, &c.—have also a tradition of Congo origin, as have the Lala and Lamba peoples to the south, and the Kaonde in North-Western Rhodesia, to mention only a number of the bigger tribes. Whatever the date and order of their arrival it is sufficient for our present purposes to state that all these tribes have certain features in common. The languages they speak are 101 sufficiently alike for them to be grouped for administrative purposes as 'Cibemba-speaking people'.[2] They are all predominantly agricultural as are the kindred peoples in the Congo.[3] Descent,

[1] J. C. G. Coxhead notes that Lacerda visited the Lunda kings in the region in 1798, and deduces that this tribe arrived some sixty years earlier, i.e. in 1740, and the Bemba a generation or two earlier still. *The Native Tribes of N.E. Rhodesia: their laws and customs*, R.A.I. Occasional Papers No. 5, p. 3. Verhulpen considers that 'Babemba' was the name given to the Lunda people when they had crossed the Luapula into their present territory. Op. cit., p. 391. The Bemba themselves are emphatic that they arrived with the Lunda and parted with them just south of Lake Mweru.

[2] Cf. tribal map at the end of the book. Members of all these tribes are described as 'Bemba' by compound managers on the N.R. copper belt.

[3] A few cattle and sheep are kept by the tribes in the Bangweolu swamps, such as the Ushi, Bisa, &c., by the Cewa on the Nyasaland border (A. Hodgson, *J.R.A.I.*, 1933, p. 152) and the Lunda in N.W. Rhodesia (Smith and Dale, op. cit., vol. i, p. 131), and a certain number of the Kasai tribes give a marriage payment in sheep and goats, such as the Songe (Van Overbergh, *Les Basonge*, 1908, p. 215), and Luba (Verhulpen, op. cit., p. 262), or even in cattle among the

2 Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1939
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clan affiliation, and succession to office follow the matrilineal line, and marriage is matrilocal with service performed by the bride-groom for his father-in-law as the essential element in the contract, not the transfer of goods. Associated with the marriage rites are girls' initiation ceremonies without any corresponding ritual in the case of boys. All these Bemba—Bisa—Lunda—Lala—Lamba peoples recognize themselves as being closely akin, and many of their clan names are found widely distributed over the whole area. They are sharply distinguished from the tribes on the Nyasaland border of Northern Rhodesia which have been dominated by the invasion of the pastoral, patrilineal Ngoni, who broke off from the main body of the Zulu, trekked north, crossed the Zambesi in 1835, and settled in the country of the matrilineal Cewa, Tumbuka, and Senga. They are also differentiated from those tribes of North-Western Rhodesia which were originally conquered by invading peoples from Bechuanaland (Ruhutse) and later from Basutoland (Kololo) to form the present Barotse kingdom, and from the Ila-speaking peoples in the Kafue valley, who also show strong southern influences, keep cattle, and combine patrilocal marriage and patriarchal authority with matrilineal descent. These Bemba-like peoples must also be reckoned in a different category from the cattle-owning tribes, mostly patrilineal, on the northern border of Bembaland, such as the Lungu, Itabwa, and Mambwe, which resemble more closely Eastern Bantu groups like the Nyamwesi to the north-east of Lake Tanganyika. For all these reasons we are justified in regarding the Bemba, Lunda, Bisa, Lamba, Lala, and even the Kaonde peoples, to take only the most prominent of these Northern Rhodesian tribes, as ethnically akin and possessing many characteristics in common. Of these the Bemba themselves are the largest and most homogeneous group and can be taken as representative.

Mode of Life.

As regards their general mode of living and economic activities the Bemba are, broadly speaking, typical of the Central Bantu, and it

Nyubungs (L. Lietard, 'Étude sommaire sur la tribu des Lualua-Kasai', *Bull. Soc. Royale Belge de géographie*, 1929, pp. 40–3), but none of these tribes can be reckoned as pastoral peoples proper. In fact the exclusion of the Congo tribes from the E. and S. African cattle-complex is used by Herskovits to demarcate them as a separate culture area. 'The Cattle-complex in E. Africa', *American Anthropologist*, N.S., vol. xxviii, 1926, pp. 640–4.

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[end map 2(a)]

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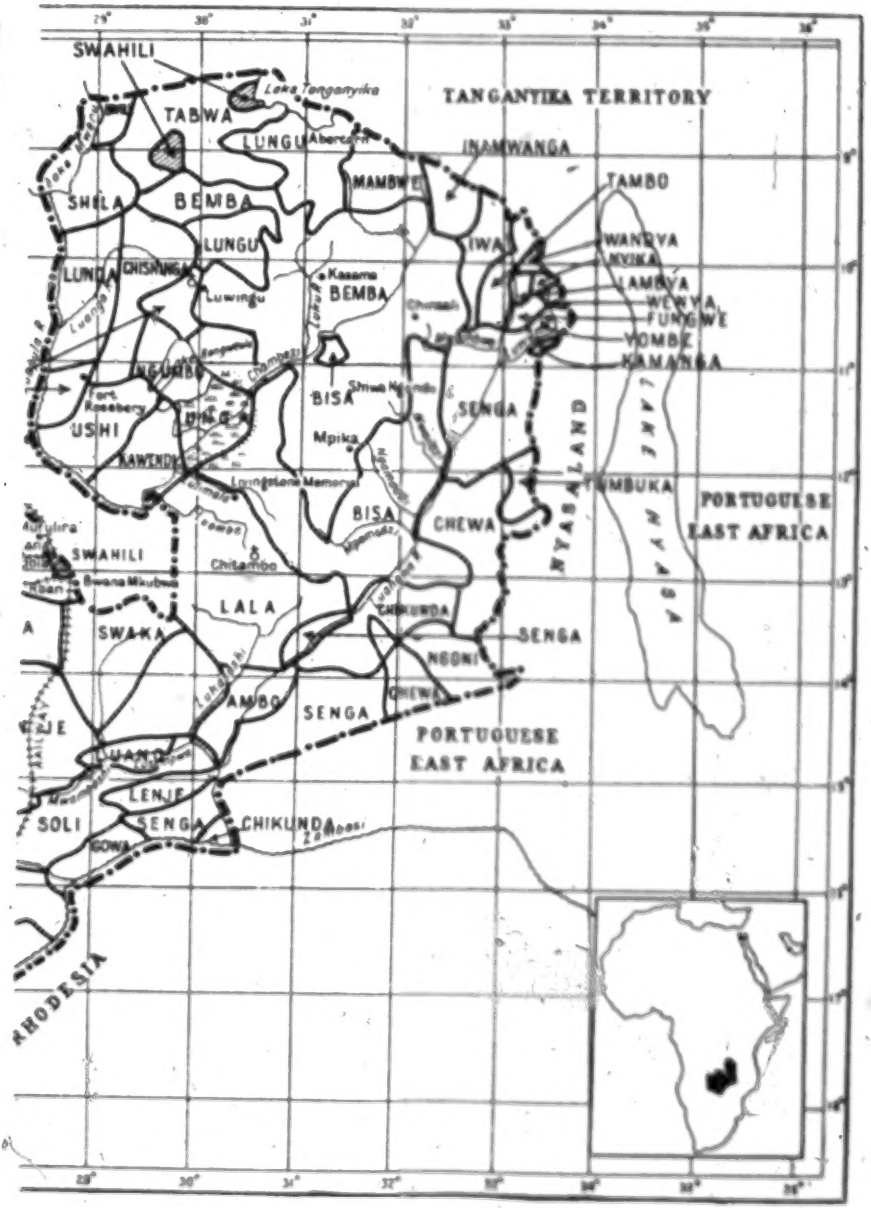

[end map 2 (b)]

4:Whiteley E-4 (no date) 1950 FQ5 Bemba FQ5

THE BEMBA AND RELATED PEOPLES OF NORTHERN RHODESIA

INTRODUCTION

This section is concerned with a group of matrilineal peoples having linguistic and other cultural affinities, who belong to the wider group usually known as the Central Bantu,(1) and occupy the north-eastern plateau and the Bangweulu Swamps of Northern Rhodesia. They include:

(I) The BEMBA, BISA, AUSHI (with sub-groups NGUMBU, CHISHINGA, MUKULU, KAWENDI), UNGA, SHILA, TABWA, BWILE, TWA.

(II) The LALA including the LUANO.

(III) The AMBO (or KAMBONSENGA).

(IV) The LAMBA, including the SEWA, LIMA and SWAKA.

(V) The KAONDE.

Notes are appended on:

(VI) The SENGA, a Tumbuka-ised offshoot of the Bisa.

I. The *BEMBA* occupy an area on the north-eastern plateau of some 20,000 square miles, between latitudes 9°-12°S. and longitudes 29°-32°E.: an area which includes virtually the whole of Kasama administrative district and much of Mpika, Chinsali, Luwingu and Mporokoso. To the west, south and east, in a corridor of varying width, stretches the territory of the Bisa. Further to the west and stretching into the Belgian Congo(2) are the Aushi and their sub-groups Ngumbu, Chishinga, Mukulu and Kawendi. The inhospitable swamps of the Lake Bangweulu are occupied by the Unga and the little-known Twa. To the north-west are the Shila, Bwila and Tabwa, also extending into the Belgian Congo. In the territory of the last are still to be found enclaves of Swahili-speaking groups, made up of Arabs, Yao, Nyanja and other groups who, coming originally into the area as slave traders, have settled down and intermarried with the local population. Some Tabwa (c.3,500 in 1937) and Bemba (c.30,000 in 1937) are living as minorities in the reserves demarcated by the Commission of 1927.

II. The *LALA* occupy an area between 12°-15°S. and 29.5°-32.5°E., covering the whole of the administrative district of Serenje, parts of Mkushi and Petauke districts and an area in the Haut-Katanga district of the Belgian Congo in the territory of Sakania. This last, also known as Bukanda district, is occupied by four Lala chieftaincies.(3) Munday describes it, as well as the Luano country to the south, as being occupied by similar, but distinct groups: Bena Bukanda and Bena Luano.(4) There is little other

(1) cf. I. Schapera, "A working classification of the Bantu Peoples", Man, May, 1939.
(2) See map for the extent of the Aushi, Bemba, Shila and Tabwa into the Belgian Congo.
(3) Lamba, 1946, No.8, p.233.
(4) Munday, I, 1940, p.435; 5, 1948.

southwards has been noted by Munday.(1) The Lamba occupy about one-fifth of this whole area.

Prior to 1926 there was little interference with tribal settlement or movement in the area. In that year, however, a commission was set up to determine native reserves - to be set away from but with access to the railway southward from Ndola and away from the immediate vicinity of the Copperbelt, both of which areas were deemed capable of development by Europeans. Four reserves were subsequently set up: (1) Lamba - Lima (redefined in 1942), (2) Swahili - Yao, (3) Swaka - North, (4) Swaka - South (redefined in 1943). The result of these changes on the population distribution is discussed below.

V. The *KAONDE*(2) are the most westerly group of the peoples under consideration, and occupy the greater part of the administrative districts known as Kasempa, Mumbwa and the old Solwezi district. It is not clear how far their territory extends into the Belgian Congo. Verhulpen's(3) tribal map of the Katanga province of the Belgian Congo marks the Kaonde as extending almost to 24° east to an average depth of 45 miles over the Northern Rhodesian border. Maes and Boone,(4) however, make no mention of any Kaonde groups in the Congo; there is an isolated reference to 'Kawonde' in Angola(5) but this is not substantiated by any other references. Moffat Thomson(6) mentions that there are Kaonde in the Congo.

VI. The *SENGA* occupy both banks of the upper reaches of the Luangwa river between about 10°30'S.-12°S., and parts of the administrative districts of Lunsazi and Chinsali. There has been some confusion in the past of the Senga with the Nsenga people,(7) who are located to the south-east of the lower reaches of the Luangwa river and who formerly extended over to the west bank. It seems clear that the Nsenga are of Maravi stock, with Lenje-Lala accretions, who seceded from the Ceva about the middle of the last century.(8) In contrast, the Senga appear to be a Bisa offshoot with Tumbuka(9) accretions, who were driven into the valley under Bemba pressure. The difference is also to be seen in language. (See p.70 below.)

The *MAMBWE-LUNGU*, numbers of whom are found in the northern districts of North-eastern Rhodesia, have been grouped historically, culturally and linguistically(10) with the patrilineal Iwa and Mwanga to the east of them, with whom they share affiliations to the Fipa peoples of South-west Tanganyika. Linguistically, while Doke(11) considers both to be dialects of Bemba, Guthrie(12) places Mambwe and Lungu with Fipa in a single group, with Iwa and Mwanga in a second group of the same zone. The Mambwe-Lungu are not

(1) Munday, 1, 1940.
(2) Other variations, e.g. *Kahonde*, *Kawonde* are found in Belgian publications but the above is generally recognised as being correct.
(3) Verhulpen, 1936.
(4) Maes and Boone, 1935.
(5) Van Buggenhout and Wens, 1933.
(6) Moffat Thomson, 1934.
(7) viz, Loxhead, 1914; Moffat Thomson, 1934; Trapnell, 1943.
(8) Livingstone, *The Zambezi and its Tributaries*, quoted by Poole, 1934; Tew, 1950, p.31.
(9) Poole, op.cit.
(10) See Moffat Thomson, 1934; Meinhard, 1947; Guthrie, 1948.
(11) 1945. (12) op.cit.

101 considered here but will be discussed in a forthcoming section concerned
131 with the peoples of the eastern shore of southern Lake Tanganyika and adjacent regions.

In brief, the Bemba-Lala-Lamba-Kaonde groups, with their closely related sub-groups, occupy almost the whole of North-eastern Rhodesia and the northern parts of North-western Rhodesia, besides adjacent areas of the Belgian Congo.

132 With the exception of the swamp-dwelling groups, the Unga and the Twa,
133 all live under broadly similar conditions. Plentiful rainfall waters the generally unproductive plateau soils covered by deciduous woodland. The
161 density of population which such land can carry is small, reaching only to about 12 persons per square mile, and this figure is not exceeded, or even approached, except in reserves where local over-population of a serious nature occurs, and in the swamp areas where inundation creates a land shortage either permanent or seasonal. The total population of the selected groups can be reckoned to be about 440,000.

GENERAL CULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS

197 The languages of these peoples are closely similar, so much so that the whole group of peoples in this area has been loosely termed "Bemba-speaking".(1) Guthrie, however, distinguishes within one of his linguistic zones *Bemba* with *Aushi* as a sub-dialect; *Tabwa* with *Shila* as a sub-dialect; and a further group of closely related languages, *Bisa, Lamba, Lala, Soaka,* and *Sena.*(2) He places *Kaonde* in a different linguistic zone, L, because it has certain distinct features, such as a single prefix in independent nominals, which make it more closely related to the Luba group of languages. No mention is made of the languages spoken by other small groups closely related to the Bemba, such as Chishinga, Mukulu, Ngumbu, Kawendi, and Baile. What little is known about the languages spoken by the Unga and Twa suggests that they may be closely related to Bisa.

174 There is apparently little linguistic evidence to support the tradi-
173 tion held by all these peoples that they originated in areas west of the Luapula from peoples of Luba stock, although Richards says that Bemba told her that archaic words they used in ceremonies at their Paramount's court were "Ciluba".

105 These people practise shifting cultivation with finger millet as the staple crop in the east and cassava in the west. The absence of cattle in the area distinguishes them from the Mambwe to the north and some of the Ngoni to the east. The greater part of the area lies within the tsetse belt, but Lambo mentions that cattle were used as marriage payments among the Lala, and a few goats and sheep are kept by the Bemba and probably by other tribes. Hunting was highly developed in the west of the area before the arrival of Europeans and hunting guilds and associations are recorded.

(1) Richards, 1939, p. 16, and Moffat Thomson, 1934.
(2) Guthrie, 1948. A zone is both a geographical and a linguistic concept in that the languages within it have both linguistic affinities and geographical propinquity.

4:Whiteley E-4 (no date) 1950 FQ5 Bemba FQ5

I. THE BEMBA AND RELATED PEOPLES

TRIBAL AND SUB-TRIBAL GROUPINGS AND DEMOGRAPHY

NOMENCLATURE

The Bemba and Bisa were formerly known as the Wemba and Wisa on account of the fact that the initial consonant is a bi-labial fricative the sound of which is midway between a European W and a B. In the new orthography B is used to represent this sound. The Aushi (also called Batushi, Ba-usi, Wa-uzhi, Wa-usi) were formerly known as Ushi but the nomenclature here adopted is now generally accepted. 101

The Unga are described in Belgian publications as Honja, while Kawendi are also sometimes described as Bena and Kabende.

POPULATION AND DISTRIBUTION

The Bemba are the largest tribe in Northern Rhodesia; their numbers in 1933 being given as 114,274,(1) although a later figure suggests that 140,000(2) is more accurate. The 1933 figures for the other groups are as follows:- 161 162

Bisa	41,591	Ngumbu	24,116
Aushi	28,958 *	Chishinga	22,604
Unga	13,670	Tabwa	7,918 *
Kawendi	9,189	Shila	5,536 *
Nukulu	10,522	Bwile	4,745
		Twa	1,480

(* Excluding groups living in the Belgian Congo)

The density of population is difficult to estimate on account of wide local variations; an impression may be gained from the following estimates for administrative districts:-

	Persons per square mile	
	1938(3)	1949(4)
(Chiengi	4.05)	Not listed as a district in subsequent publications
Mporokoso	4.05	4.6
Abercorn	6.2	6.9
Isoka	3.54	4.6
Kasama	6.67	8.0
Luwingu	7.86	9.2
Fort Rosebery	7.79	8.0
Chinsali	3.46	3.7
Mpika	1.86	2.3

(1) Moffat Thomson, 1934.
(2) Richards, 6, 1939.
(3) Pim, 1938.
(4) Appendix F. *Report of the Financial Relationship Committee*, Lusaka 1949. The source of these figures is not, however, stated.

THE LUAPULA PEOPLES

INTRODUCTION

Published data on the peoples of the Luapula Valley, the most important of whom are the Lunda of Chief Kazembe, are extremely meagre. They consist mostly of casual information scattered through the pages of travellers', officials' and missionaries' books. It would have been impossible to make any ordered survey on the basis of these data. Fortunately, however, Mr. I. G. Cunnison, Research Officer of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute, was in England for a few months after completing his first year's researches in the region, and was kind enough to make available his rough manuscript on certain topics as well as information embodied in lectures he gave at Oxford. Without these it would have been impossible for this part of the survey to have been written at all. As no full, considered analysis of his material has yet been made by Mr. Cunnison, he has no responsibility for my interpretations in any part of this survey.

GROUPING AND DEMOGRAPHY

The Lower Luapula valley is inhabited by groups of diverse tribal origins. Those on the east bank of the river in Northern Rhodesia are known to their neighbours as *Bena Kazembe* (the people of Kazembe) and are often collectively described as "Kazembe's Lunda". The conquering Lunda (also known as *Londa, Alunda, Varunda, Aronda, Alonda, Balonda*),(1) were probably never numerically preponderant, but they established themselves as a governing class and still retain to some extent their former prestige and political ascendancy. The west bank of the Luapula, which lies in the Belgian Congo, has passed under the dominance of the Nkuba of the royal Shila (also known as *Wasira, Messira*) line. This ruling group of the matrilineal Shila, congeners of the Bemba,(2) had earlier controlled territory on the east bank but were subdued by the invading Lunda before the middle of the eighteenth century.

The kingdom of the Lunda Kazembe thus consists of an elongated strip of country stretching almost due north-south for about one hundred miles, along the meridian 28° 45' between 9° and 11° lat. S. To the west it is bounded by the Luapula, and to the east by the uninhabited hills of the escarpment beyond which lies the tribal territory of the Chishinga. Beginning about thirty miles south of the Luongo, a tributary of the Luapula, it extends northwards to Lake Mweru and twenty miles up its east shore to the Mwateshi stream, including Sokwe island on Lake Mweru.

The limits of the modern Nkuba kingdom to the west of the river can be indicated with less certainty as running from Lake Mweru in the north through the Kundelungu mountains and thence to the river about the same latitude as the southern limit of the kingdom of Kazembe.

The valley forms a natural ecological and economic unit orientated

(1) Burton, 1873, p.36. (2) See p.1.

7:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1940 FQ5 Bemba FQ5

dates from this period, since the composition of the invading group still determines the title to chieftainships, rank, succession to various offices, and the order of precedence of a number of the older clans.

The Bemba are to all intents and purposes a homogeneous group. They form a quite distinct political unit from the Bisa, Lala, Lunda, and other neighbouring tribes with similar traditions of origin and marked cultural and linguistic affinities. The Bemba declare that their forefathers found the country empty on their arrival, and, whether this is true or not, there seems to have been no strong opposition from whatever groups occupied the territory. The war-like habits of this tribe seem to have developed later, when they spread into the surrounding districts, pushing back their neighbours, such as the Lungu to the north-west, the Bisa and the Lala to the west and south respectively, and the Cewa to the east. The dominance of the Bemba chiefs was still more effectively enforced by the import of Arab guns in the nineteenth century. Where they did not dislodge the occupants of the surrounding country, their chiefs appointed members of the royal family or specially faithful subjects to hold the district for him (*ukulashika*) and to collect tribute of ivory tusks, grain, iron-work, salt, or other goods. The empire of the Bemba extended at one time right up into the Congo and to the shores of Lake Tanganyika, and they exerted influence over most of the present Bisa and Lala country to the south. With the coming of the white man at the end of the nineteenth century, their authority over the surrounding tribes collapsed, and though Bemba chiefs still rule over Bisa villages, e.g. in the Chinsali and Luwingu districts, it is rather a case of tribal admixture on the borders than a large-scale incorporation of foreign elements such as has occurred in the history of some of the Southern Bantu states. For the purposes of the present inquiry, we can reckon the Bemba as a homogeneous tribe with a history of settled occupation of their present territory lasting about 200 years.

The distinctive marks of tribal membership are the following: (*a*) The common name *Babemba*, still uttered with a good deal of pride in such phrases as '*Fwe Babemba*' ('We, the Bemba'), used to preface bragging references to the exploits of the tribe as compared to those of surrounding peoples, who are still sometimes referred to contemptuously as slaves (*bashya*). (*b*) The common

7:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1940 FQ5 Bemba FQ5

language (*Cibemba*), which forms a distinct dialect in native eyes, although it does not differ very considerably from the neighbouring *Cibisa* or *Cilala*. (*c*) The tribal mark, a vertical cut on each temple about 1 in. long behind the eyes. (*d*) The common historical traditions of the people—even young men at the present day speak with pride of the coming of their fathers from Lubaland, and take delight in describing the military exploits of their ancestors and the ferocity of the old chiefs. (*e*) Their allegiance to a common paramount chief, the Citimukulu, whose overlordship of the Bemba territory is unquestioned.

(*b*) *Social Grouping*. (1) *Kinship*. The Bemba are a matrilineal tribe practising matrilocal marriage. Descent is reckoned through the mother and a man is legally identified with a group of relatives composed of his maternal grandmother and her brothers and sisters, his mother and her brothers and sisters, and his own brothers and sisters. His membership of this group determines his succession to different offices and his status in the community, although in a matrilocal society it only occasionally determines his residence. He also belongs to a wider descent group, the clan (*umukoa*, plur. *imikoa*) which is also traced in the woman's line. Each *umukoa* is distinguished by the name of an animal, plant, or natural phenomenon, such as rain. It has a legend of origin usually describing the split-off of the clan ancestors from the original lineage group, and an honorific title or form of greeting. Clans are in effect exogamous, since a man may not marry a woman he calls 'mother', 'sister', or 'daughter', and these terms are extended to the limits of clan membership on the maternal side. Through his clan affiliation, a man traces his descent, rank —if he belongs to the royal clan—rights to succeed to certain offices, such as hereditary councillorship (cf. pp. 100, 108), and claims to his relatives' help and hospitality.

Some clans have a higher status than others, according to whether their original ancestors arrived in the country as part of the following of the first Citimukulu, or alternatively, split off as a separate descent group later. Thus the crocodile clan (*Bena yandu*) is the *umukoa* of the first immigrant chief and stands highest in status (cf. 'Rank'), while various others, such as the fish clan, millet clan, &c., are said to be of similar antiquity. The hereditary councillors described later belong to these clans. All the *imikoa* are paired with opposite clans that perform reciprocal ritual